# FREE SOCIETY

ENTERED AT SAN FRANCISCO POSTOFFICE AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER.

An Exponent of Anarchist-Communism: Holding that Equality of Opportunity alone Constitutes Liberty; that in the Absence of Monopoly Price and Competition Cannot Exist, and that Communism is an Inevitable Consequence.

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## BE CONTENT.

Said the parson! Be content.
Pay your tithes—dues, pay your rent;
They that earthly things despise
Shall have mansions in the skies.
Though your back with toil be bent,
Said the parson, be content.

Then the parson feasting went,
With my lord—who lives by rent,
And the parson laughed elate,
For my lord has livings great.
They that earthly things revere
May get bishop's mansions here.

Be content! Be content!
Till your dreary life is spent.
Lowly live, and lowly die
All for mansions in the sky!
Castles here are much too rare,
All may have them—in the air.

—Thomas McGuire.

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## THE REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS.

DEAR COMRADES,—You must have received a copy of the enclosed circular, issued by the Paris comrades who are organizing this congress, to be held at Paris, September next. No doubt you have published it in Free Society ere this, and as it speaks for itself, I need add to it a few words only. You also know, of course, that the recent issues of the Paris Anarchist papers Temps Nouveaux, Pere Peinard and Libertaire have contained several articles dealing with this congress and urging upon their revolutionary comrades all over the world to take a lively part in it, so as to make it a grand manifestation of international Anarchism and revolutionary Socialism altogether.

You also must have noticed that excellent paper by our old friend Lefrancais in Temps Nouveaux about what the last congress of the parliamentarian Socialists has NOT done. They hotly discussed how to seize power in the present parliaments; but they have NOT given us even so much as the slightest hint as to what use they intend to make of that power; they have not even faintly indicated in what direction they intend to settle—or attempt to settle—by means of their would-be "scientific" Socialism, the all-absorbing economical, political and moral questions which rise before the mind of the worker when he becomes anxious to throw off the old yoke of centuries.

It may be asked,—Why should not we, Anarchists, united with all the revolutionary Socialists, join the international labor congress which is convoked by the Social Democrats? Of course, those few of us who will be admitted to it by the German Social Democrat leaders, may join it—perhaps MUST join it, in order to tell the Social Democrat workers that beside the tactics which is enforced upon them by their leaders, there are also tactics—the revolutionary—which are followed or aspired to by thousands upon thousands of other workers, in all countries of the world. It is necessary to make them understand that there are other tendencies besides State Socialism and Bismarckian Communism which grow in the minds of the workers and will find expression in facts during a revolutionary period as they already find it nowadays.

But the experience of the last three international congresses has proved that the discussion of both the revolutionary tendency and the free, libertarian conceptions of the coming revolution will necessarily be excluded from that congress. People, whose thoughts are absorbed by the question, how to attain influence in the present middle class governments, cannot discuss such questions. We must, then, discuss them separately.

The first congresses of the International were great, and they exercised a formidable influence upon the growth of Socialism generally, because those great questions as to the possibilities of a Communist organization of society were discussed in detail. And they were discussed—not by the few writers who are the usual contributors to our papers, BUT BY THE MASSES OF THE WORKERS THEMSELVES—in their groups or sections first, then in their partial local small congresses. The writers of the International had thus only to formulate, to edit, the opinions expressed by the workers themselves.

This is what many of us intend to obtain from the coming Revolutionary International Congress. All over the world small groups have already set to work to study in detail some question or questions upon which they have to say something. Questions of theory, of organization, and of today's work. Such questions as, for instance, the general strike, which becomes, as you know, more and more popular; of the attitude towards the co-operators; of agricultural colonies; of honesty and moral courage of the workers themselves in their labor organizations and in their strikes against war, or against the fabrication of tools of war, or in their relations towards the unemployed—and a host of similar questions are not "abstract theories." Every one has continually to solve them this or that way for himself, and an open, broad discussion of them is of absolute necessity.

Then again the so-called questions of theory. Last year the English co-operators asked me to write for their Annual an essay upon the ways in which the railways could be wrested out of the hands of capital, and socialized, without giving them up, however, into the hands of the State. To a question of such an immense importance (is it "theory"?) I had to reply that only workers who work on the railways could suggest a proper solution; that if I could give a year's time to live among them and to discuss it with them, I probably should guess THEIR solution of it, and be able to put it down on paper; but being unable to do so I must refrain from promoting any solution which would be sure to be wrong because it would be theoretical only.

At every step we must and are obliged to solve questions such as: The docks; the mines of unequal productivity; the factories supplied with machinery of very different efficiency;—and similar ones. The Social Democrats have, of course, a ready reply to all that. "When we shall have a Socialist parliament, we shall devise all that." But such a reply is the most abominable and shameful trick performed upon the credulity of the workers, and WE cannot join it. We must study these questions, and we are bound to find out in which direction the popular mind inclines to solve them.

And the same applies again to questions as to how to increase relations between the workers of the world. For authoritarians such questions do not exist. The Socialist deputies of different countries will meet once a year and settle them all in one or two sittings: they will nominate an executive and the millions of workers will have only to obey their Socialist chiefs. But such a solution will not suit the independent individual who sees in it the most certain guarantee of a failure in all serious assaults against capitalism. We must work out the means of a genuine intercourse between the workers of all nations, and a congress where workers of all the world will meet and freely discuss their wants will be again the best means for nearing the first steps in that direction.

The idea grows therefore more and more that as great a number as possible of libertarian, Anarchist and revolutionary workers from the whole world must meet at Paris in, let us say, September next; and that the congress should result in something much more important than mere bonds of personal knowledge and friendship, or the mere records of its discussions; that it should throw into the international Socialist movement a flood of new ideas; of new, seriously considered suggestions as to the future development of the movement.

To achieve this end numbers of comrades, many of whom will not even be able personally to attend the congress, have set about to work out elaborate essays upon a considerable number of questions dealing with so-called "theory," so-called "organization" and the immediate problems of the day. There will be no time to read all these essays; but short epitomes of them will be read to serve as a basis for the discussions. Several of these essays will be printed in Anarchist papers before the convening of the congress. But all of them will be printed afterwards, either in full or in abstracts, in every country, so as to constitute a contribution of the greatest practical value for the development of clear ideas as to the character of the Social Revolution we look forward to, and the means of achieving the greatest possible results in each revolution that may, and is sure to break out within measurable distance in each separate country. Some of these essays, as, for instance, the essay upon the working of railways without the interference of State and capital, (which will in all probability be written by the powerful Railway Workers' Organization of Spain), will be something more important than any essay that could be written in a studio, from old and rusty books.

Excuse me, dear comrades, the length of this letter. I wanted to give you a CONCRETE idea of what is expected here, in Europe, from the coming congress. If I dare to make a suggestion to our American friends, it would be to send in—delegates of course, but also and above all a number of well-prepared suggestions coming from the labor organizations themselves, as to what they consider practical solutions in the way of socializing the use of the soil, the railway, the mines, the magazines of food and so on, as well as upon any suggestions they might make upon any questions connected with the reconstruction of society which we all strive for. The enclosed paper of Lefrancais which enumerates what the Social Democrates have NOT done—and most certainly WILL NOT do—may give you some more suggestions.

Most fraternally yours,
PETER KROPOTKIN.

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Governor Gage has ordered California Labor to be robbed of abont $30,000 by means of an extra session of the legislature for the purpose of sending another millionaire to the senate, which can now boast of twenty-seven multi-millionaires, representing the insignificant sum of $170,000,000.

The latest addition to the Millionaire Club from this State, Bard, was pitchforked into the office by $100,000 the sugar trust sent to Sacramento for that purpuse, and at the same time gave the whole nation the intimation that from henceforth and forever none but millionaires will become senators. These be the gods! Oh, Stateists, fall down and worship them, ye fooled voters! But further be it known unto you, that the senators are only used as buffers between the "sovereign people" (Sir Walter, forgive me!) and the eight or five—*majority*—Supreme Court judges, who in their infinite wisdom or through the infinite power of gold, decide just what is best for the constitutions of 82,000-000 people. This includes the last purchase of 10,000,-000 Filipinos who may in due time be permitted also *to make fools of themselves by voting.* K.-J.

# FREE SOCIETY.

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**Anarchy.**—A social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all direct government of man by man as the political ideal: absolute individual liberty.—Century Dictionary.

## NOTES.

The St. Louis Republic calls the story told by Charles Eltonhead "an interesting" one. He is 45 years old, and was forced to tramp 500 miles in search of work, suffering agonies, and freezing his hands so completely that all the fingers will have to be amputated. Such a picture of modern conditions may be simply "interesting" to a subsidized, fat-salaried syndicate editor, but a believer in human rights would choose a different term. Wage slavery is based on the most infamous system of force and fraud; but the unemployed are denied even the privilege of becoming slaves. They are outlaws, despised and suspected on all sides. For the crime of poverty, and of inability to find a master, they are forced into vagrancy, and then treated as criminals, or driven to starve or freeze to death. Yet their just share in the land and all its products is logically as unimpeachable as that of any other human being. They are heirs to the treasures of the universe, robbed of their birthright. Their cause, and that of the exploited wage-workers, is one and the same; and the wholesale plunderers, who are at present our economic and political rulers, will one day be made to realize this fact in a manner most uncomfortable to themselves.

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The audacity of the political sharkers is seen in Kentucky, where one man paid another for his vote; and when the other man went back on his word, brought suit to recover the money obtained under false pretenses. It is as hard to decide between the two, as to discuss the merits of two rotten eggs. It only goes to show afresh that the ballot is a mere plaything of ringsters, and of no earthly use to the people. No enlightened man has any business fooling with it. Quit using it altogether.

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The Filipino insurgents are now to be treated as bandits. This was only to be expected. The bloodthirsty proclivities of Otis and the administration could not be satisfied with the lives taken on the battlefield. So, although large bodies of Filipino warriors remain in arms to resist American invasion, the war is officially declared at an end; and all who continue to fight for liberty and independence are liable to be murdered in cold blood, whenever taken prisoners. Scarcely a protest has been recorded against this infamy. The past four years have witnessed so many flagrant outrages on decency and humanity that any single offence on the part of the ringsters who rule and disgrace us attracts but little attention.

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Talk of "civilized warfare!" A few weeks ago, the St. Louis Post Dispatch contained an article by a woman, who is in the Philippine Islands as president of the White Cross Commission. She told of borrowing a gun from a soldier, and shooting at the Filipinos, with much gusto, as if this were a very creditable procedure. She only wished she were a man, so that she could shoot a raighter. Every tyro knows that the White Cross people receive special privileges as neutrals, and are bound in common honesty to act as such. But our civilized governments, which are so rigid in dealing with one another, conveniently sink all scruples when the foe is too week to retaliate. The same is true in South Africa, where Winston Churchill and other newspaper correspondents have violated every principle of war, and abused their position as neutrals, by bearing arms on the British side.

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A Kansas soldier, returned from the Philippines, tells me that Otis is notoriously a coward, as well as a tyrant, and thoroughly despised and hated by his own men. He is constantly guarded, for fear of being shot by some soldier out of revenge for the bullying and petty tyranny which form the chief elements in his nature. This is the man who refused to allow any facts to pass the censorship, which could possibly hurt the administration. It seems we are singularly blessed with an administration which is worse hurt by truth than by anything else. Its remedy for existing evils is always to hide, never to cure them.

J. F. M., Jr.

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## ACROSS THE CONTINENT.

I.

### BOSTON TO PROVIDENCE.

Self-advertising is particularly disagreeable to me; but I find that many comrades wish to know something of my trip through the country, the facts noticed, and the condition of the movement in different centres. Hence it seems well to give at least a meagre account of my experience, since leaving Boston, Oct. 9, 1899. I cannot, of course, tell everything, as there are many things in connection with the movement, which it would be premature to publish at present. I hope to present additional results of my trip, after reaching the comrades in San Francisco. Let me recommend to all comrades to keep a special address book, in which to record the names and addresses of known comrades. Some of these may be gleaned from radical papers, and others from different sources. It is of the utmost importance that we know just where to find each other. Much valuable time is often lost for lack of this knowledge. I would suggest that contributors to our papers always sign their full addresses, for the benefit of other comrades. In this sketch of my tour, I intend to give the addresses of all comrades I refer to, when such are known to me. Please pardon me for apparent egotism. It is hard to avoid this, when writing in the first person.

Boston is renowned as the centre of culture. It is a city that improves upon acquaintance. As cities go, it is a home-like place, in which conservatives and radicals alike find congenial environment. It contains more "cranks" of all kinds than any other city of the same size. There is always a ferment of thought going on. Any quantity of new ideas and small sects, religious, political, social, economic, spring up there, and find each a group of uncompromising adherents. Boston boates the finest Christian Science Church in the country. It also contains Mrs. Woodbury, Mary Eddy's rival as a Christian Science leader. There are several congregations, representing various phases of Mental Science, the best known and highest regarded being that of Helen Van Anderson. Of the six rival sects into which the Theosophical Society is now divided, at least three are represented by active groups in Boston, by far the strongest being that devoted to the "Universal Brotherhood," and recognizing Katherine A. Tingley as leader. Hermetists, Koreshans, the Order of the Magi, the followers of Oahspee, Christadelphians, Quakers, Mormons, Nitapaths, followers of Helen Wilmans, T. J. Shelton, Merten (Sidartha), Solar Biologists, and many others, as well as the recognized religious sects, are thoroughly represented. Palmists, phrenologists, clairvoyants, crystal gazers, and "seers" of every sort, are here in abundance. Of course, there are multitudes of Spiritualists, and no end of mediums. Astrologists are plenty, and find many believers; but at present there are several new schools of astrology, starting from the original idea of reading human destiny in the stars, but following entirely different methods of casting and interpreting horoscopes. Some of these are distinguished by the names of geocentric astrology, spiritual astrology, solar phrenology, and the like. Other quaint ideas have come under my observation, which it would take too long to describe. Boston is the finest possible field for a student of the workings of the human mind. But I must resist the temptation to enter into a full description of the characteristic traits of the city in which I have lived so long.

Amid all these conflicting ideas, social and economic questions occupy a very large place. Every theory is warmly espoused; and every patent "reform" quickly secures a large following. There is no need to enumerate them all; for their name is legion. But in all this confusion of thought, the minds of the more intelligent men and women are becoming restless. The inefficacy of these petty panaceas is becoming apparent to them; and they are seeking a deeper solution to the human problem. They are beginning to perceive, dimly enough at first, that individual freedom is a logical necessity for true development or real happiness. The terrors which have clustered about the word "Anarchy" are beginning to be dissipated, and full conviction is not far distant. For example, the Walt Whitman Fellowship is one of the livest literary societies of the city. It includes in its membership the editors of Poet Lore, and several well known writers and lecturers. Nearly half of its members are now declared Anarchists; and almost all the rest are friendly towards the movement, and always eager to hear the exposition of Anarchist ideas.

Of active comrades, there is an earnest group, composed of all nationalities. They mean business, and are thoroughly devoted to the cause. Karl Snellenberg, 9 Lansdowne St., is secretary of the group. He is a quiet, but unwearied worker, of long experience and excellent judgment. Once in a while there is a recreant; but they are rare. One man there is, who understands well the philosophy of Anarchism, and was once thoroughly devoted to it. He has left the movement, not from conviction, but because of his wish to enslave a woman. He tormented her so with his brutal jealousy, that she was finally forced to leave him in self-defense. She was permitted to go nowhere, and speak to nobody, without her tyrant's special permission. Since the Anarchist philosophy taught her some self-respect and demand for individual rights, he abandoned the movement, and forbade her to speak to any Anarchist. Fortunately we have not many of his stripe.

Just before leaving the city, I had a chance to attend a group meeting, and say good-bye to the comrades. They were full of plans for future work, one of which was to bring over John Turner from England, for a thorough American tour. A discussion of the November commemoration brought out the fact that, in the East at least, we are still deficient in effective speakers. This needs to be remedied; and there is reason to believe that a very different state of affairs will exist within the next few years.

My first stop was in Providence, R. I. Here a little unterrified group of comrades maintains earnest propaganda work against great odds. It was here that Emma Goldman spoke in a public square, two or three years ago, and was arrested for "rioting." This time, the comrades were unable to secure a hall for a meeting; but I addressed a parlor gathering at the house of comrade John H. Cook, 298 Lockwood St. As long as Comrade Cook and a few others remain in Providence, the light will be kept burning there. A brief visit, many invitations to come again, a fraternal greeting to all comrades—and off for New York.

James F. Morton, Jr.

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## "CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED."

Thomas Jefferson used the language in the Declaration of Independence. In June, 1776, a committee was appointed to draw up the declaration. It was laid before congress and passed July 4, 1776. . . . At the very time Jefferson wrote this famous declaration he as well as Washington and the colonists generally held slaves. . . . Did the language of the Declaration of Independence apply to these slaves during that time? No, the Constitution of 1787 calls slaves persons held to service, etc. No "consent of the governed," that is, those persons held in in bondage, was ever asked. . . .

Did the Declaration of Independence mean that the slaves and Indians were created free and equal, that they were endowed by their creator with certain rights, etc., the same as Washington, Jefferson and all the colonists assembled in congress at Philadelphia July 4, 1776? No, this would be absurd. It was the equality and rights of freemen that were declared, not slaves, Indians, or any persons of any other country. It was a declaration of intelligent Englishmen to intelligent Englishmen. The rights which the colonists charged Great Britain had deprived them of were the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—and they said further: All men (you of Great Britain and we of the colonies) are created free and equal, etc. . . The American Indians were treated, not as being created free and equal and endowed by their creator with certian rights, etc , but the Constitution of 1787 of the United States claimed sovereignty over all the territory held by the Indians. Wars followed for years with all the tribes. No "consent of the governed" has ever been asked up to this time. And today the remnant of the tribes scattered over the United States, about 400,000, are held in bondage by the military power of the government.

The above is a clipping from one of the daily papers contributed from the pen of Wm. L. Mitchell, who, it appears, is not at all backward in defining the language of his forefathers. And why is this unmuzzled encyclopedia so eager to show up Thomas Jefferson as a slaveholder? Will slavery be any less abhorrent because of this? Are the wrongs of today to be judged by the errors of a century ago? Why parade these mistakes as the gospel of today? Because there are sinister intentions beneath this sly, insidious and cunning cover of words. In his whole article (nearly a column in length) the writer gives a few grains of distorted truth embroidered with falsehood. As a lie cannot stand on its own merits, it must steal a passport from the grave because the dead are not here to speak for themselves. Could Jefferson appear among the living, what a scor-

ing would he give these political huxters who are so constantly using his name as a conjuring word to juggle with? In almost every political brothel the needle of politics is being threaded with some of the most barefaced contradictions to the Declaration of Independence, all claiming to have been spun in the brain of Jefferson. He has been resurrected, interviewed, misquoted and eulogized in turn, by the very party stench against which his entire public life of three score years was a never ceasing protest.

Owing to the conditions of his time and the accident of circumstances, Jefferson was a slave owner. He inherited quite a number at his father's death and a large number came to him with his wife's estates; but nowhere in history is there an instance recorded where he bartered in human flesh for profit. He fully emphasized his opinion of slavery when he liberated his own slaves. To assume that Jefferson favored or in any way encouraged slavery, is either a concsious falsehood, or the one who makes the assumption is ignorant of the facts and knows absolutely nothing of past history. If Mitchell would stop writing and devote his spare time to reading, he would learn how sad his mistakes. He would learn how Jefferson opposed slavery from the very beginning.

In 1776 Jefferson presented a bill to congress asking for the gradual emancipation of the slaves. In that same year he was successful in getting a bill passed forbidding the transportation of slaves in his own State, Virginia. Why does Mr. Mitchell so persistently ignore these facts so commonly known to every school child? Does he imagine that he can make history read to suit his whims, or that others are not capable of reading and comprehending as well as himself? Note how he puts a twist of "freemen" and a satire on the declaration "all men (you of Great Britain and we of the colonies) are created free and equal." His brain seems capable of the most impossible imaginings.

Yes, the declaration meant that all men were created free and equal,—anything less than this would destroy the very essence of the principle contained therein. "No, this would be absurd" does not change the matter. Mitchell says, "It was a declaration of intelligent Englishmen to intelligent Englishmen." But where are his credentials for this? Is he of higher origin than other people? The poor benighted, unbalanced, quill-drawing, ink-spilling freak of nature does not seem to comprehend that the American colonists were not free and equal according to his application of those terms. What the Philippines were to Spain before the war, the American colonies were to Great Britain a hundred and twenty odd years ago. Where has Mitchell been all these years incubating his ideas?

No, the declaration was not simply an appeal to intelligent Englishmen. That is another stretch of his imagination. It plainly reads: "We the representatives of the United States of America in general Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions," etc., etc. Does that sound like an appeal to Great Britain? Does not the preamble read, "A decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation"? Then follows: "We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happines." Does that read as if only a few Englishmen were intended as entitled to these rights? It says *all men*, and it is easily comprehended without the need of pigmies to define it. Why does Mitchell insist on assuming this burden of responsibility? Does the entire dictionary of words and definition rest on him? Is he taller, broader, heavier or stronger than others, or has he a corner on the brain market that makes him so self-important?

He speaks of those "that were held in service." Why, the entire people of the colonies were held in service. The black chattels were only held in trust; the colonists did not even own themselves at that time. What constitutes slavery? When a person is wholly subject to the will of another, is it not? And does not all history proclaim that the American colonies were held to be the absolute property of Great Britain and the people subject to the caprice of the crown? Everything leaving these shores had to go on English ship bottoms; all goods coming here had to pass through English markets. American manufactures were prohibited. With plenty of fur at hand, the colonists dare not make their own caps; with abundance of iron ore in the hills, they were not allowed to make as much as horseshoe nail. In every respect England treated the people on these shores as an inferior race. Why juggle with words and try to make distinctions that do not differ in principle.

In his crazy meanderings see how Mitchell rings in the Indians; note how he creeps toward despotism preparatory to the final plunge, how he tries to bolster up the right of conquest as the gift of his forefathers, and tells how American sovereignty spread its wings over the vast territories of the West without "the consent of the governed." It reads like a yellow covered novel of the Dick Turpin order. There were no governed to ask consent of! The land was taken by force.

Mitchell says, "The Indians were treated, not as being created free and equal," and "today the remnant of the tribes, about 400,000, are held in bondage by the military power of the government." Another of his characteristic blunders. He should post himself better before trying to write history for the daily press. Does he not know that when New Mexico was ceded to the United States that the Indians, some 9,000, were recognized as citizens of this country, holding the franchise equal with himself? He is aware that this government would be only too glad to give the franchise to all Indians that will abide by its rules. But they are not tumbling over each other to fetter themselves with the chains that Mitchell wears so becomingly. No sir, the Indians are not held in bondage, they are not even held in check when they choose to assert themselves. They are often tricked into bargains and get mercilessly swindled by their more cunning white brothers, but when they learn the truth they usually find the way to strike a balance without consulting the government. The Nez Perces Indians, for instance. The Poncas Indians rebelled against staying on the reservation allotted them in the Indian Territory and went back to their old haunts among the Omahas. This even got to the courts and it was decided that they were citizens of the United States and could not be confined to any particular reservation. Some of the older tribes of Indians were slave holders (Oklahoma Indians) and they took up arms in defense of the Southern Confederacy during the Civil War. Where and how has this Mitchell lived to be so ignorant of these facts so well known to every reader?

True, the politician did try and is yet trying to play sovereign over the red men, but the game is yet on tap and bids fair to be a long time playing. It is a dirty trick for the politician to play, Willie, and you ought to be ashamed to give it away. Permit me to blush for you.

But suppose that some more powerful nation than this should conclude to play sovereign here, would your ideas continue expanding in the same direction? Come now, dear expansionist, tell the truth and shame the devil.

In looking over my manuscript I am somewhat surprised at its length, but fear I must still further endanger its acceptance by quoting Mitchell's closing remarks in order to reveal the incentive for the article under criticism:

The Don Quixote Masons, the wild-eyed, frenzied Pettigrews, the cranky Hoars and freaks generally, applying the Declaration of Independence, emphasizing the words "consent of the governed," "full of sound and fury" to the Filipinos, is but an illustration of the devil quoting Scripture and how a little learning is a dangerous thing. . . . I hear in the dim distance the voices of the hundreds of millions yet to live between Plymouth Rock and the Golden Gate as they sing at morn their praises to Almighty God, and I hear them answered back at eve by the millions of Christian, free, intelligent people of the Orient.

Gee whilikens, how these politicians must love each other! And yet, my friend Mitchell, the "wild-eyed, frenzied freaks" are not all on one side. Are not they of the other side entitled to the same "inalienable rights" you prate so much about?

Perhaps, I say perhaps, "a little learning" may be a dangerous thing, but, frankly speaking, I think you could stand a heap of it before you reach the danger line. Take my advice: cultivate, by all means cultivate; keep the pronoun *I* in the background and let her go Gallagher, you won't take cold on it. Get learning if you can, but I beg you, don't try to write for the daily papers until you get the knack of reading history right side up and comprehend the subject you write about. Pray, don't pay any attention to those voices you hear in the dim distance.

You'r a corker on wheels, old boy, but you need rest; you haven't enough ballast for such a head of steam, and your visions are getting alarmingly frequent. Rest, d—n it, take a rest. L. S. Oliver.

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Send for "Moribund Society and Anarchy."

## COMMERCIALISM.

Jean Grave says: "Now, behold those Anarchists launched into discussions of Anarchy, Communism, the initiative, organization; the harmful or useful influence of groups; egoism and altruism; in fine, a lot of things one more absurd than the other. For, after being thoroughly discussed by honest opponents, the end of it is that all want the same thing, though calling it by different names."

The question, then, arises, Is there a real issue dividing our ranks? After an extensive reading of these opponents, calling themselves "Philosophical," "Individualist" and "Communist" Anarchists, as well as hosts of others holding no allegience to any school or party, I am convinced that we all agree with J. Grave that "freedom of all the people, complete freedom in all their modes of action, is all we ask." The question then resolves itself into this: Will the various policies advocated by our friends, result in this freedom?

Now, it seems to me that any policy entered into by any portion of the people must result in the curtailment, to a certain extent, of freedom. The most prominent and well defined policy, logically advocated by the so-called philosophical or individualist Anarchists, may be termed commercialism. I see Comrade Byington, writing editorially for Liberty, accepts this designation as the line dividing his school from all other Anarchists. Here then is a real issue. I think we may safely divide Anarchism on the line of commercialists and non-commercialists. Anarchy is an ideal that came out of Socialism. It was discovered that the principle of liberty was essential to right action; that all government was a coercive force and ever tends to defeat the object for which it is established. Hence the Anarchists would have no forceful authority.

Now, Communism is, and ever has been, a principle of Socialism. Its object was to alleviate the injustice of government as administered by individuals in their own interest. Originally its idea was to administer government in the interests of the whole people as a community. Comrade Morris refers to this idea as more properly "communityism." Its advocates now are generally identified with some form of State Socialism.

When Anarchism began to be discussed as a separate line of thought its advocates were divided, as Grave says in my openning quotation. The opponents of Anarchy generally recognize the evils of government; these they would reform by some system they are pleased to advocate; but the principle of government they hold as absolutely necessary. "There must be some power to protect the individual in his rights, to restrain the evil-minded," etc. Even our commercialist friends, calling themselves Anarchists, proppose to organize for protection and restraint, and to oblige men to live up to their contract, otherwise their policy of issuing money and maintaining a system of free competition would fail; men would take advantage of the absence of authority and project schemes to defraud, and trade and commerce would swarm with swindlers "even as you and I." The more I have thought of it the more consistent it seems to me our friends are in desiring to retain in their organization the machinery of government. As Anarchists they have a special definition of government, to wit: "An arbitrary power, a supreme authority over a special territory, supporting itself by a system of coercive taxation," which is all very well as far as it goes; but I cannot accept this definition as covering the whole of government. My idea of government is sovereign authority, and I care not whether it be exercised over a territory or over an individual. My idea of commercialism is what popularly is known as "business." Its evils are inherent and cannot be reformed any more than government—it must be abolished. Any organized force exerted to change its course will be in vain. History and experience ought to teach us that human nature given power will ever seek to aggrandize itself. The evils of trade began with competition, and government came to regulate it. But government, the rule of a class, changed it to monopoly. With the death of government competition might regain its ancient prestige, but competition is war and would again revive government. Such is even the course of evil: it destroys itself or is converted into another evil. But science and genius teach us that this evil is really unnecessary. "Business" is a tyrant that may be slain by self-conscious individuality.

East Elma, N. Y. A. L. Ballou.

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Can truth be determined by popular vote?

**259**

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"The subscription list of a publication as second class matter must approximate 50 per cent of the copies issued."

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Comrades, this is OUR work, and I send out this statement that those who contemplate subscribing may hurry up and so fill my list as fast as is possible. I do not think I shall have any trouble in the next application but the extra postage will continue for some time, growing smaller at each issue of course.

Lois Waisbrooker.

1501½ Market St., San Francisco, Cal.

## MORE STIMULANTS.

Although agreeing with comrade Wm. Holmes, that discussions of a personal nature are of little value, I nevertheless hold that, in some cases, differences of opinion, expressed through the press, though nominally pointing to some one in particular, becomes actually a question of general interest, considering the subject involved.

I was amazed on reading Comrade Holmes' "Stimulating a Critic" in No. 255 of Free Society; at the extreme "radicalism" by which he apparently is carried in the name of logic. Comrade Streit's assertion that Anarchy and law exclude one another, is quite logical, since Anarchism is the very reverse of man-made laws, while to parallel the vocation of a lawyer with that of a wage worker is—to say the least—sophistry: but to go so far as to say that a keeper of a public house of prostitution is no less an Anarchist for all that, is a statement that would arouse anybody's feelings. Why not be a reverend then, a priest, a rabbi, a political heeler, etc., and still be an Anarchist?!

It's true, Anarchism repudiates wage-slavery as well as law and government, and to be consistent, no Anarchist should be a wage worker, but under present order of things this would mean refusing to procure life's necessaries; for, having no adequate education or knowledge of any kind, one must of necessity sell the only commodity at his disposal—his manual labor for maintaining a livelihood.

This allowance we must make for the Anarchist wage worker as a fact self-evident, but we cannot consistently do the same with the lawyer, the judge—let alone the keeper of a brothel.

There are certain limits which we must not trespass, if our convictions and ideals count for aught, otherwise every aggression can be justified on the premise that, since we cannot absolutely live up to our principles, we may commit any base deed imaginable and yet remain Anarchists at heart.

It's erroneous, therefore, on the part of Comrade Holmes to suppose that were there many Anarchist judges and lawyers, and jurors, it would be a good thing in general, although there may be an exception at times.

Let me call the attention of Free Society readers to a very essential point, in my opinion, for the right understanding of an Anarchist's attitude: To be a follower of Anarchism means not only attending meetings, writing articles now and then or delivering a lecture.

True Anarchism involves more serious obligations: it means to endeavor to exercise our ideas and principles where and whenever an occasion presents itself; to show an example of manly action and sacrifice and not to appear before the outside world as fantastic dreamers, who give utterance to fine and lofty phraseology, while leading lives of "practical" men. Anarchy means the absolute negation of law and authority and to justly bear the name "Anarchist," one must utilize every chance to fight against all existing accursed institutions with might and vigor.

True, an Anarchist attorney, judge or juror may sometimes save an unfortunate from prison, but this can be accomplished by a non-Anarchist lawyer as well. There is rarely a law suit where ANY lawyer would refuse to defend the "guilty," and "cheat" the law.

In propagating our ideal we cannot consider the immediate benefit of each and every individual; our aim must rather be to reach the greater number, having in view results—remote—at the same time. The indirect diffusion of our ideas by Anarchists refusing jury-service, etc., is of greater value than many other means of propaganda, and no immediate benefit of any single individual can compensate the loss of so valuable an act. Above all, bear in mind, that the most effectual weapon of any ideal has always been its moral aspect and the relation it has borne to practical life, while history proves that the adaption of any new creed of teaching depends chiefly, if not entirely, upon the moral side of the disciples of that particular creed or teaching.

Bertha Leib.

## JOHN MOST IN CLEVELAND.

Monday night, March 11, comrade John Most addressed a meeting in Cleveland which was very poorly attended, there being only a handful of people present. He spoke German and his subject "The Communist Anarchist" was well chosen, for I am sure that every word he uttered went straight home. He showed clearly that so long as private property prevails there will be rich and poor, and the latter will be dependent on the former and how such a condition of things leads, on the one hand, to a terrible accumulation of wealth, to insufferable pride, to insane avarice, ambition and cruelty; and on the other hand, to an impoverishment of the masses that grows daily more and more shocking, and is accompanied by all the characteristics of physical and intellectual decay, therefore down with private property; down with the State, which is not an institution for securing the general well-being of the people, but only a means of defense that the rich have set up against the propertyless; and down with the Church—down with all creed-swindles and priest-humbug, heaven and hell. When we have done away with these three curses of mankind we will have freedom and equality, culture and happiness, and the establishment of those just conditions that are going to be created by Communism and Anarchy, of which Mr. Most gave a witty illustration.

The few who heard him enjoyed his lecture very much which they showed by the frequent applause. One of our daily papers stated that Most found fault with everything in the world, above it and below, and insisted that everything is going to the bow-wows right away. It closed by stating that Most still wears whiskers.

A.-L.

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